Stephen Arthur, Vancouver 2023 sxarthur@shaw.ca bit.ly/stephenarthur

ARTIST STATEMENT ABOUT MY ARTWORK

Coming to terms with the knowledge that I've likely lived my whole life on the Asperger's spectrum, I find that I have sensitivities and a sense of salience that are "neurodivergent"; I'm an outsider in both my external and internal perceptions. Sometimes when watching movies I see bright flashes that my partner cannot see at all until the frame is frozen, and there it is. Like all Aspies, I have overly-intense moral ideals accompanied by an awareness of unnecessary disparities. And I go deep into things, such as getting a degree in neuroscience in the hopes of understanding human minds. Internally, in Jung's terms, I have strong *introverted intuition*, which is rare, and keeps me close to the dream world with visionary (but atheist) "revelations" in my spontaneously improvised paintings. What I create through subconscious processes is usually a kind of visual poetry. As personal as my visions may be, I believe they represent the collective unconscious, revealing ambiguous or previously unseen relationships between us, our psyche, and our world. I believe they can wake us up to the complex dilemmas of being human.

Some of my works are psychological, playful, visual humor, or abstract, but most of them reveal serious, socially-conscious subjects. All of them are true surrealism in the traditional sense, yet also symbolist, expressing those mysterious truths that may only come from a surrealist approach. This can be disconcerting to viewers.

Because of my lifetime of filmmaking, storytelling, and self-taught animation, the results of my subconscious impulses usually appear as a kind of cinematic narrative.

GENERAL STATEMENT ABOUT MYSELF, EDUCATION, AND EXHIBITION HISTORY

Born in Vancouver, Stephen Arthur started making award-winning animated films at age 14 and continued to make them while studying biology at UBC. Subsequently, he turned to experimental live-action films, followed by graduate studies in conventional live-action film production at the University of Southern California. This led to a ten-year period of writing six feature-length screenplays while making a living as a technical writer. After a third major detour as a neuroscience graduate student at UBC, Arthur returned to his roots as a self-taught experimental animator, this time on the computer. He was then awarded the maximum amount from The Canada Council for the Arts for both a creative-development grant and a film-production grant. His most notable film, "Transfigured," animates the paintings of Jack Shadbolt as an NFB production. After a decade of intensive Buddhist insight practice (now lapsed), Arthur became an intuitive painter using simple tempera paints. His paintings are created by an automatic stream of consciousness. He has been making a painting every week for the last two years. He loves being constantly surprised by what arises in the scenes of his unplanned paintings as he reacts intuitively from one image to the next. Influences include the pre-contemporary Surrealists and the "process painting" philosophy of Stewart Cubley. Solo exhibition: Outsiders and Others gallery in Vancouver, 2023. Sales: Outsidersandothers.com/intuitive-painting-by-stephen-arthur and sxarthur@shaw.ca. Image licenses: Flickr.com and Shutterstock.com.